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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/577,932	05/25/2000	Shigeyuki Maruyama	000663	4823
38834	7590	06/21/2005		EXAMINER
WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP 1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, DC 20036			CHU, CHRIS C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2815	

DATE MAILED: 06/21/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/577,932

Applicant(s)

MARUYAMA ET AL.

Examiner

Chris C. Chu

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 May 2005.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1 - 3 and 13 - 18 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 1 - 3 and 14 - 18 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 13 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendment filed on May 11, 2005 has been received and entered in the case.

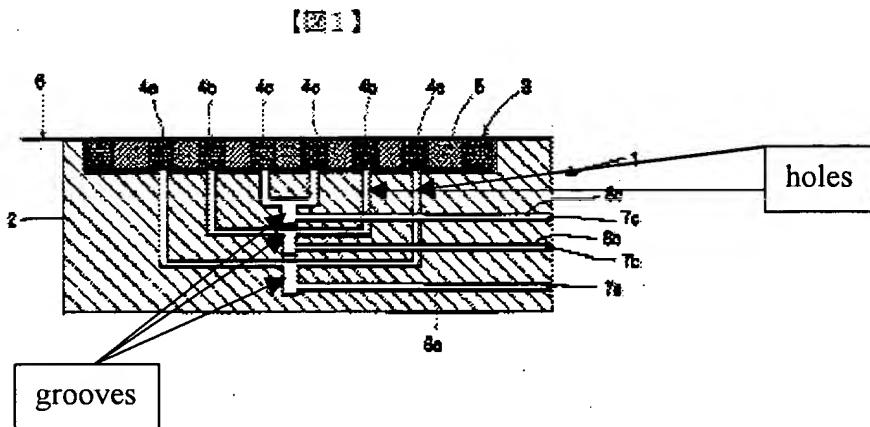
Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shuzo (JP 06-143,073).



Shuzo discloses in e.g., Fig. 1 an apparatus for fixing a semiconductor wafer by suction, comprising:

- a vacuum chuck table (1; section 0012, line 2) having a porous plate (3; section 0012, line 1) overlaying a plurality of concentric suction grooves (grooves in the element 1; see previous page of this Office action);
- a plurality of suction passages (8a – 8c; see Fig. 1) each being correspondingly connected to the plurality of concentric suction grooves (see Fig. 1); and
- each of the plurality of suction passages being connected to more than one hole (holes in the element 1; see previous page of this Office action) on the porous plate (see Fig. 1);
- suctioning device for sequentially introducing a suctioning force into the suction passages at different timing (since each 8a – 8c are connected to the source of a vacuum by separate inlets 7a – 7c, the suction passages 8a – 8c disclosed is conceivably able to allow the suction force into the suction passages at different timing even if it is not optimized for this purpose).

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 1 – 3 and 14 – 18 are allowed.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hanaoka et al., Hiyamizu et al. and Thompson disclose a vacuum chuck table with a porous plate.

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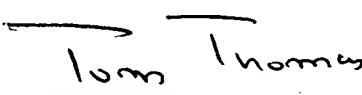
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chris C. Chu whose telephone number is 571-272-1724. The examiner can normally be reached on 11:30 - 8:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Thomas can be reached on 571-272-1664. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Chris C. Chu
Examiner
Art Unit 2815

c.c.
Tuesday, June 14, 2005


TOM THOMAS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER